

Answers to Questions Regarding RFQ 09-13 Virtual Tape Library

Q1. In RFQ 9-13 you state the purpose of the RFQ is to solicit responses from firms or other independent contractors interested in providing an IBM Virtual Tape Library with three years of standard 24x7 support.

In the specific listing of items to be quoted you list, what I assume to be specific IBM part numbers. Is it the specific intentions of the AOC to accept bids from superior technology vendors where the functionality required by the AOC can be matched and/or exceeded by non-IBM equipment?

A1. Yes

Q2. Considering Exhibit B, of the RFQ, if the intention of the State is to acquire the functionality it requires to meet its business requirements at the best price, how will the AOC grade the responses provided if vendors bid non-IBM parts?

A2. AOC will compare the equipment responses on various criteria (speed, capacity, roadmap status, service organization, etc.) to verify it is compatible.

Q3. How can a non-IBM vendor compete fairly if IBM part numbers are specified in the RFQ rather than functional requirements?

A3. See Answer A1

Q4. Please provide a specific definition of "three (3) years of 24x7 support".

A4. We require twenty four hour, seven days of week of onsite support on the equipment and software required. Hardware vendor needs to be onsite within 2 hours of dispatch.

Q5. In regards to pages 11-13 of the RFQ, you state, "The supplied equipment must match the equipment below, or be 100% compatible", please define what you mean by "100% compatible".

A5. See Answer A1

Q6. Additionally, can you please let me know how the AOC will determine whether equipment bid by a vendor is 100% compatible? Is there objective criteria available or a specified test? Why is there a requirement that equipment be 100% compatible to IBM products? Is there a business requirement that necessitates the compatibility to IBM's Tape Library? If so, please detail the specific business requirement.

A6. Please see answer A2

Q7. Additionally, the RFQ is silent on tape conversion and the cost of tape conversion. Will the AOC be releasing a separate RFP or entering into a professional services contract to account for this cost? Is there any consideration for proposals that do not require tape conversion and the resulting savings to the State of Washington and AOC? How will this significant savings be quantified within an RFQ process?

A7. Conversion services are not part of this RFQ, nor any future planned RFQ.

Q8. Within Exhibit B, there are several part numbers with descriptions such as "Request Proposal for Prices", can you please explain what these line items are for?

A8. We understand those are internal IBM part numbers generated by the configurator they used to build the recommended configuration based off the tape study.

Q9. Can you please provide to me the detailed information AOC received from IBM or any of its resellers that would have allowed the AOC to include a specific part numbers list within the RFQ?

A9. The planning information received from IBM and IBM Business Partners is similar to the information received from Sun's Business Partners; which was a recommended configuration based on a tape study performed by the vendor (IBM, Sun, and associated Business Partners).

Q10. Is there any association between RFQ 9-14 and RFQ 9-13? Has there been any communications with IBM or any of its resellers regarding the procurement anticipated for RFQ 9-14 and RFQ 9-13 that would place a competitive bidder for RFQ 9-13 at a competitive disadvantage due to the fact that IBM is the only provider of CPUs and that if IBM or a reseller were to price both RFQs, price shifting between competitive RFQ to a non-competitive RFQ such that the State is disadvantaged by the pricing in aggregate?

A10. RFQ 09-13 and RFQ 09-14 are separate procurements and will be evaluated as such.

Q11. Was the AOC ever provided with an unsolicited or solicited proposal from IBM or any of its resellers detailing the replacement of its tape subsystems and the upgrading the CPUs on its mainframe within the same proposal? If so, can you please provide a copy of all correspondence and proposals from and to IBM or any of its resellers to assist us in preparation of our response?

A11. The AOC has never received a combined response for both tape and CPU replacements/upgrades.

Q12. Can you please provide me with copies of any proposals or information provided to AOC in the creation of RFQ 9-13, by IBM or any of its resellers?

A12. See answer A9. Other documents can be requested through public disclosure request after RFQ closes.

Q13. Has IBM or any of its resellers provided AOC with a proposal including cost estimates for tape conversion from the Sun STK tape systems? If so, can you please provide a copy of all communications related to this issues.

A13. Tape conversion is not part this RFQ. We recognize that replacement media is required, so that is part of this RFQ.

Q14. Please verify if you are looking for 3 additional years of hardware maintenance to start at the end of the 3 year warranty?

A14. AOC is looking for coverage for 3 years total.

Q15. The terms and conditions referenced on link on page 8 seem to be directed at software. Can you please confirm this is correct?

A15. Generally, this is the standard language of the Terms and Conditions, but there may be some changes made during the contract negotiations with the successful bidder. This was only set forth as an example.

Q16. Is there sufficient machine room floor space for the equipment listed in Exhibit B for installation prior to June 30, 2009

A16. Yes

Q17. Is there sufficient cooling and power in the machine room for the equipment listed in Exhibit B?

A17. Yes

Q18. When will the earliest date that power and access to the machine room will be available to the successful vendor?

A18. After contract is executed

Q19. Are there any time and day restrictions for installation and attachment to existing AOC equipment that need to be factored into this RFQ?

A19. No

Q20. Will AOC personnel be available to successful vendor during installation?

A20. Yes

Q21. RFQ 9-13 Virtual Tape Array anticipates installation of the Virtual Tape Array. Specifically, what equipment will the Virtual Tape Array be attached to?

A21. The AOC Mainframe Servers

Q22. Could you please provide a functional diagram of the proposed equipment and all equipment it will be connected to, with interface types.

A22. We do not have such a document. Interface types from the devices to the mainframes will be FICON.

Q23. In anticipating the installation of equipment to AOC infrastructure, will AOC warrant that all required interfaces will be available and that no additional equipment or loaner equipment will be needed to effect the installation.

A23. No

Q24. Is AOC responsible for the design, configuration and architecture of the equipment listed in Exhibit B?

A24. The AOC is not responsible for the design, configuration and architecture of the equipment listed in Exhibit B, as that is IBM equipment and they are the ones who designed it, configured it, and architected it. The equipment listed in Exhibit B was produced from a tape study done by IBM and/or business partners.

Q25. If the design, configuration and architecture of the equipment listed in Exhibit B is found to be inadequate or incomplete, or necessary equipment is missing and not listed in Exhibit B, will AOC hold the successful vendor harmless?

A25. No. See Answer A9. We expect the vendor to stand behind their tape study and their recommendations.

Q26. If due to the design, configuration and architecture of the equipment listed in Exhibit B, performance of the delivered and installed equipment fails to meet market expectations, will AOC hold the successful vendor harmless?

A26. No. We expect the vendor to stand behind their tape study and their recommendations.

Q27. Please clarify that there are no performance warranties outside of standard equipment warranties and service support contracts included within the RFQ.

A27. We expect the vendor to stand behind their tape study and their recommendations.

Q28. Additionally, is there any specific installation configuration that is required under the various Line items listed in Exhibit B?

A28. Do not understand the question.

Q29. Are the IBM part numbers in Exhibit B for new or used equipment?

A29. We assume it is new equipment. However used equipment can be bid as long as it meets the RFQ requirements and is warranted as new.

Q30. If the IBM part numbers in Exhibit B are mixed between new and used, please list which part numbers are for used Equipment versus new Equipment.

A30. See Answer above

Q31. In Exhibit A, Item 12, you state "State the Trade-In value on the STK Silo (contact RFQ Coordinator for serial number information). Trade- In includes de-install and shipping." Will the trade-in of the STK Silo be mandatory or optional under this RFQ?

A31. Vendors can indicate the trade in value and if they can even do a trade-in. Trade-in is not mandatory, however, if one vendor provides a trade-in and another does not, we will calculate the cost of removal and include that into their response.

Q32. In Section 3.2 of the RFQ Schedule you state a specific schedule and time for the Equipment being delivered and installed of June 30, 2009. Is this day a specific date for both delivery and installation or is this a due date for completion of the installation?

A32. The equipment must be received by June 30, 2009

Q33. Can you please detail whether there are any acceptance criteria for the equipment under this RFQ?

A33. The equipment works as proposed.

Q34. What is the time-frame for de-installation of the STK Silo?

A34. Unknown. However, we would like to be utilizing the new equipment as soon as possible.

Q35. Please provide me with the serial number for the STK Silo as listed in Exhibit A.

A35. These are the descriptions and serial numbers for the Sun Hardware Renewal Quotation dated December 10, 2008:

- Used 9310, Library, Std Door s/n 4000003936
- Used 9311, Library Cntrl Unit s/n 8000003947
- Used 9330,3270x4 Lib Mgt Unit s/n 216000003525
- BASE MODEL s/n 265000004624
- Sun StorageTek 9840 - Used T9840A ES, 9740/9310 s/n 330000020100
- Sun StorageTek 9840 - Used T9840A ES, 9740/9310 s/n 330000005632
- Sun StorageTek 9840 - Used T9840A ES, 9740/9310 s/n 330000025016
- Sun StorageTek 9840 - Used T9840A ES, 9740/9310 s/n 330000025018
- Sun StorageTek 9840 - Used T9840A ES, 9740/9310 s/n 330000020101
- Sun StorageTek 9840 - Used T9840A ES, 9740/9310 s/n 330000025020
- Used 9490 M32A, LIB s/n 232000009057
- Sun StorageTek 9840 - Used T9840A ES, 9740/9310 s/n 330000051829
- Sun StorageTek 9840 - Used T9840A ES, 9740/9310 s/n 330000051830
- Sun StorageTek 9840 - Used T9840A ES, 9740/9310 s/n 330000005077
- Sun StorageTek 9840 - Used T9840A ES, 9740/9310 s/n 330000005090

Q36. Beside the STK Silo mentioned in Exhibit A, will any other equipment be traded-in in conjunction with this RFQ?

A36. The SILO components and VSM

Q37. Will the AOC be trading in their existing Sun STK Virtual Storage Manager in addition to the STK Silo? If so, please provide the serial number to me.

A37. The VSM and tape library are included. VSM s/n 530-00001997

Q38. Will the STK Silo that will be traded-in include all of the existing drives? If so, please provide the individual serial numbers for the drives.

A38. Yes. See Answer A# above.

Q39. In Section 4.3 RFQ Scoring, you state "Responses will be scored as follows: Items will be scored according to the following scoring criteria. - The vendor must meet the requirements in Exhibit A. - The lowest proposed cost for will receive the most points." Is there a grammatical omission in the last bullet point?

A39. Yes

Q40. In Section 4.3 RFQ Scoring, you state that "Items will be scored as follows: " Is there a predetermined scoring mechanism by Section for Exhibit A? if so, how many points are awarded for each section?

A40. No

Q41. How many total points are available in Section 4.3 RFQ Scoring? How will these points be split between the two scoring criteria stated in the RFQ?

A41. See A40.

Q42. In Section 4.3 RFQ Scoring, will the scoring of Exhibit A be subjective or objective?

A42. Objective. However we assume the reference checks will be subjective.

Q43. In Section 4.1 AOC Evaluation Team, how will the make up of the Evaluation Team be done?

A43. AOC Staff will be the evaluation team.

Q44. In Section 4.1, there seems to be a conflict with Section 4.3. In Section 4.1 it states "The Team may also consider past contract performance and may factor into the evaluation technical specifications that exceed the required specifications." If the RFQ is scored per Section 4.3 of the RFQ, how will the AOC Evaluation Team consider the items in Section 4.1? Could you please provide an example of the RFQ scoring methodology to illustrate how this process may work.

A44. Based on the responses received, the evaluation team will recommend an apparently successful vendor.

Q45. In Section 4 RFQ Evaluation, there does not seem to be a description of how the apparent winner will be chosen. Could you please clarify if the apparent winner will be the response with the highest score as anticipated by Section 4.3?

A45. See A44.

Q46. If a proposal is submitted with non-IBM part numbers and the AOC Evaluation Team does "factor into the evaluation technical specifications that exceed the required specifications" and the proposal is scored lower due to a higher cost as scored under Section 4.3, and overall the proposal is not the apparent winner, can the AOC Evaluation Team select the proposal with the best value for AOC even if the overall cost is higher to AOC and more expensive than other proposals?

A46. Based on the responses received, the evaluation team will recommend an apparently successful vendor.

Q47. Is there a requirement under Washington Law that requires the Chief Justice to declare an emergency to procure the equipment listed in this RFQ?

A47. No

Q48. If so, has an emergency been declared by the Chief Justice for this procurement?

A48. See A47 above

Q49. Is there any requirement for equipment not listed in Exhibit B to be installed within the Virtual Tape Library prior to June 30, 2009?

A49. All equipment for this RFQ must be received by the AOC by June 30, 2009

Q50. The RFQ does not request any data other than the part number and a price. How will the AOC provide a transparent and objective grading of vendor responses if "various criteria" is not specifically requested as part of the RFQ?

A50. If the vendor response is not understandable to the evaluators, they will ask for clarification.

Q51. Is there a scoring criteria in place to judge the "compatibility"?

A51. AOC Staff knowledge and expertise

Q52. AOC responded to the question with the word "etc.", the Merriam- Websters Online Dictionary defines "etcetera" as "a number of unspecified additional persons or things" or in the plural, "unspecified additional items", how can a vendor anticipate and respond to unspecified additional items or consider a number of unspecified additional items?

A52. Question unclear.

Q53. We would respectfully request a clarification on the specific criteria and response grading methodology to be used to compare responses.

A53. AOC Staff knowledge and expertise

Q54. You use the term "100% compatible" to describe the requirement for non IBM part numbers however you answer the questions posed with the word "compare" do you mean that non-IBM vendor's equipment needs to be "comparable" to the IBM part numbers?

A54. Functionality of the components

Q55. Can you please provide the objective criteria for speed, capacity, roadmap status, and service organization?

A55. Some of the features we are looking for are Private Key Encryption, ability to turn encryption on and off dynamically, 4 Gb FICON connectivity to the AOC Mainframes, replication over TCP/IP (for DR), encryption Key Manager utilizing existing RACF/ICSF key stores, 1TB tape drive capacity, speeds of at least 120 MB/seconds, Nondisruptive upgrades, local SE support from the OEM, product not end of life, past history of creating service calls.

Q56. Has the AOC independently verified the criteria it will use to compare speed, capacity, and roadmap status, and service organizations of IBM?

A56. No

Q57. If the AOC is setting IBM as the de-facto standard and all other vendors are to be compared to some objective standards, could you please publish the data and standards to be used, by line item, for the items requested in the RFQ.

A57. If a vendor is proposing a 100% compatible solution, they should indicate how the equipment is compatible.

Q58. Will there be an opportunity for vendors to contest the data, and or standards, of the IBM equipment prior to grading responses?

A58. No

Q59. Is AOC relying upon IBM for the data to be used as the standard or has the AOC independently verified the data?

A59. AOC is relying upon the tape studies performed by the vendor, and their recommendation for a solution.

Q60. It would seem that non-IBM vendors are at a competitive disadvantage in bidding on this RFQ if we are not afforded the specific detailed data and criteria that will be used to rate non-IBM vendors responses, we request an objective criteria and process that is reviewable.

A60. As a tape vendor, non-IBM vendors should be able to take the equipment that is listed in the RFQ and determine a compatible solution.

Q61. We do not believe that the answer provided answers the specific question asked. The answer to A1 was "Yes". This question asked how a non-IBM vendor could compete fairly if IBM partners are specified in the RFQ. We respectfully request a specific answer to the question asked.

A61. As a tape vendor, non-IBM vendors should be able to take the equipment that is listed in the RFQ and determine a compatible solution.

Q62. This answer does not answer the question on what the AOC defines as compatible. We respectfully request that AOC answer the specific question asked.

A62. As a tape vendor, non-IBM vendors should be able to take the equipment that is listed in the RFQ and determine a compatible solution.

Q63. This response does not answer the questions asked. We respectfully ask that the AOC answer the questions previously asked. (AOC: Question 6)

A63. AOC Staff knowledge and expertise

Q64. The AOC included these line items within their RFQ and require that vendors provide a price for them. How can a non-IBM vendor provide a response to a required item that the AOC, from it's response, suggest they do not understand what the required item is or is for? (AOC: Question 8).

A64. Those particular items are codings for the 3 year warranty uplift.

Q65. Can you please provide a copy of the tape study you reference in the above answer?

A65. The tape study was created by the vendor utilizing SMF records. The tape study from the vendor produced the proposed configuration.

Q66. We respectfully, request that AOC answer the specific question asked (AOC: Question 9)

A66. See A9.

Q67. Your response suggests that data provided by IBM was the basis for the specific requirements of this RFQ. Can you please provide a copy of the specific data that AOC was provided by IBM in the preparation of their RFQ so that all vendors who wish to bid on this RFQ have the same data to understand how AOC reached their specific detailed RFQ requirements.

A67. The two major tape vendors (IBM and Sun) and/or their business partners were provided with SMF data (at their request) to analyze the AOC tape subsystems. Each of these vendors (or their business partners) produced recommended configurations.

Q68. Was the data collected and received by AOC and used in the preparation of this RFQ collected under any formal process, such as an RFI, to ensure that all vendors who provided data to AOC, were asked the same questions?

A68. The two major tape vendors (IBM and Sun) and/or their business partners were provided with SMF data (at their request) to analyze the AOC tape subsystems. Each of these vendors (or their business partners) produced recommended configurations.

Q69. Did AOC ever provide any written requests to any technology vendors detailing the business requirements of the AOC? If so, were the same detailed business requirements given to each vendor to ensure a fair, consistent, and transparent process for the development of this RFQ?

A69. Information such as batch window concerns, disaster recovery concerns, and offsite tape shipment issues were shared with the tape vendors and/or business partners during meetings.

Q70. What process or methodology was used to determine that IBM part numbers were the appropriate vehicle for an RFQ response?

A70. To ensure that any IBM business partner would be able to bid on the desired equipment with the equipment outlined from the tape study.

Q71. Has the AOC established and published any technology standards for Virtual Tape Systems? If, so, could you please provide a copy to me.

A71. The AOC has not established or published any technology standard for Virtual Tape Systems.

Q72. Will partial bids be accepted?

A72. No